

REMARKS

Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-16, and 18-23 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 4, 8, 11, 15, 18, 22, and 23 are the independent claims.

Claims 3, 10, and 17 have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 1, 8, and 25 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Initially, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 4-7, 11-14, and 18-23 are allowed and that claims 3, 10, and 17 recite patentable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of their base claims and any intervening claims. By the present Amendment, Applicants have not amended any of the allowed claims and submit that claims 4-7, 11-14, and 18-23 should remain allowed. By the present Amendment, Applicants have cancelled objected to claims 3, 10, and 17 and have amended independent claims 1, 8, and 15 to respectively to include the feature of cancelled claims 3, 10, and 17. Claims 2, 9, and 16 depend from independent claims 1, 8, and 15. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, and 16 are now in allowable form.

Claims 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,496,458 (Tsukishashi). This rejection is respectfully traversed at least for the reasons set forth above, --namely the inclusion of subject matter indicated as patentable to independent claims 1, 8, and 15.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. Further, the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons as their respective base claims and further due to the additional features that they recite. Separate and individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants believe that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action. However, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to such matters.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the


present application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

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By: 
Michael E. Kondoudis
Registration No. 42,758

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501